

the east with the west, further unifying the country as the divide between the North and the South was beginning to mend.

The transcontinental railroad was the first of its kind. It was an engineering marvel completed with great precision and speed. The railroad was an engineering wonder and it set the example for how transcontinental railroads would be built across Canada and Russia some 20 to 25 years later.

Completion of the transcontinental railroad created a new sense of wonder and enthusiasm for discovery and entrepreneurship across the country. It set the stage for a great migration of businessmen, created a new frontier for those seeking a new way of life, enabled faster movement of people and goods, and provided the country with a great opportunity to expand the economy.

Today, we are witnessing a rebirth of passenger rail in America. In the same way that the transcontinental railroad was critical to our Nation in the late 19th century, a strong national passenger rail system is vital today. In order to strengthen intercity passenger rail in this country, today I have introduced the "Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008".

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation, more commonly known as Amtrak, operates a nationwide rail network, serving more than 500 destinations in 46 States over 21,000 miles of routes, with nearly 19,000 employees. Amtrak recently marked the beginning of its 38th year of operation. Our passenger rail service has come a long way since its beginnings in 1971, and has faced many challenges since, but continues to grow stronger with each passing year. Despite uneven Federal investment over the years, Amtrak has persevered, achieving many successes in improved operating efficiency, increased ridership, and higher revenue.

In fact, in FY 2007, Amtrak set a new ridership record for the fifth year in a row, exceeding 25.8 million passengers. At the same time, Amtrak increased ticket revenues by 11 percent to more than \$1.5 billion, a figure that increased for the third straight year. These successes are being enjoyed across Amtrak's entire network. In FY 2007, Amtrak held 56 percent of the air/rail market between New York and Washington and 41 percent of the market share between New York and Boston. This shows that where Amtrak is provided the resources to succeed, it provides a trip-time competitive alternative to air and car.

America needs to look toward Amtrak as we address our growing transportation needs. The Department of Transportation describes the problem of congestion on our highways and in the air as "chronic." Amtrak removes almost eight million cars from the road annually. Airports are experiencing significant delays too, with more than 400,000 flights departing or arriving late in 2006. Amtrak eases air congestion by eliminating the need for 50,000 fully loaded airplanes each year.

Amtrak is also a substantially more environmentally friendly mode of transportation than automobiles or airplanes. According to the World Resources Institute, rail transportation produces 57 percent less carbon emissions than airplanes, and 40 percent less carbon emissions than cars.

Madam Speaker, I lend my strong support to the commemoration of National Train Day on May 10, 2008, and encourage all of my

colleagues to use this excellent opportunity to reflect on the benefits that Amtrak and intercity passenger rail provide to our Nation.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO SHAUNDELL NEWSOME

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. PORTER. Madam Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to rise today to honor Shaundell Newsome by entering his name in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, the official record of the proceedings and debates of the United States Congress since 1873. Today I pay tribute to Shaundell Newsome, President and CEO of Newsome Marketing Enterprises, for his role in promoting excellence in small business throughout the Las Vegas community.

At the age of 14, Shaundell began his love for marketing while he was attending the High School of Graphic Communication Arts. While he served 10 years in the United States Air Force, he greatly enhanced his communication skills by becoming the Morale Welfare and Recreations Coordinator for his squadron. Following his service in the military, Shaundell joined Station Casinos' Marketing Department, where he helped to successfully launch the company's popular Boarding Pass Rewards Program. He then went on to serve as the marketing director at Sante Fe Station. Looking for a way to focus his attention on providing practical yet "outside the box" marketing solutions for small businesses, Shaundell founded Newsome Marketing Enterprises in 2006.

While working to continue his newly established marketing firm, Shaundell was often recognized for his efforts to create professional opportunities for others, particularly in the minority-business community. As a board member for the 100 Black Men of Las Vegas, he focused on creating new economic development opportunities for the non-profit organization. He also worked with Valley Center Opportunity Zone (VCOZ) to assist small minority businesses within the enterprise zone by presenting workshops, including his well-known "Marketers Anonymous—A 12 Step Plan". He often shares his expertise by giving personal consultation to various organizations and businesses. Shaundell also works closely with the Urban Chamber of Commerce and the North Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, playing a vital role in advocating for small businesses.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to honor Shaundell Newsome and would like to recognize his small-business accomplishments within the Las Vegas community. I would also like to congratulate him on receiving the Minority Small Business Champion of the Year for the 2008 Small Business Awards.

TRIBUTE TO DR. TAHIRA HIRA

HON. TOM LATHAM

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. LATHAM. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Dr. Tahira Hira's appointment to

President George W. Bush's Advisory Council on Financial Literacy.

On January 22, 2008, President Bush established the new Advisory Council on Financial Literacy, chaired by Charles Schwab. Dr. Hira is one of only 16 members appointed by President Bush. The Council's purpose is to help keep America competitive and assist the American people in understanding and addressing financial matters. The Council will work with the public and private sectors to help increase financial education in schools as well as for adults in the workplace.

Dr. Hira came to Iowa State University in 1980. She is the executive assistant to the university president and a professor of personal finance and consumer economics. Dr. Hira has been teaching and conducting research in family financial management, consumer credit, gambling, and consumer bankruptcy since 1976. She has published approximately 100 articles and book chapters and given approximately 200 national and international presentations in her field. Dr. Hira has also received various awards for her work and serves on several national committees and boards.

Dr. Hira's list of awards and accomplishments represents the valuable resource she has provided to Iowa State University and financial education in America. She certainly has earned her position on the President's Advisory Council, and I know she will excel in her special advisory role.

I commend Dr. Tahira Hira for her longstanding dedication and diligence to her profession and for her efforts to improve our Nation's financial literacy. I consider it an honor to represent Dr. Hira in the U.S. Congress, and I wish her the best while serving on the President's Council and in her future work.

CONGRATULATING NURSE SUSAN COBB

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 8, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Susan Cobb of Lewisville, Texas. Ms. Cobb has been named one of the Great 100 Nurses of 2008 by the Texas Nurses Association, Districts Three and Four, and the Dallas-Fort Worth Nurse Executives. She is a nurse at the Medical Center of Lewisville.

The Medical Center's mission is to consistently provide high quality health services, information and education in an environment that is compassionate, professional, and responsive to its patients, physicians, and associates. Ms. Cobb is an excellent embodiment of this which her passion and commitment demonstrate.

Each year this recognition is bestowed on nurses who embody excellence in the science and art of nursing. The chosen honorees belong to an array of professional organizations and work in a wide variety of clinical specialties. This is the 18th consecutive year that the Texas Nurses Association, Districts Three and Four, and the Dallas-Fort Worth Nurse Executives have recognized area nurses for their compassion and dedication. The recipients will be honored at a gala event on Monday, May 12, 2008.